

JFK ASSASSINATION SYSTEM

IDENTIFICATION FORM

AGENCY INFORMATIONAGENCY : NSA
RECORD NUMBER : 144-10001-10317

RECORDS SERIES :

AGENCY FILE NUMBER :

DOCUMENT INFORMATION

ORIGINATOR : NSA
FROM : NSA
TO : HCFTITLE :
3/O/ITD/T3564-63 ITALIAN REPORT ON MIKOYAN TALKS IN THE UNITED STATES [R]DATE : 12/02/63
PAGES : 2SUBJECTS :
ASSASSINATION, JOHN KENNEDYDOCUMENT TYPE : PAPER, TEXTUAL DOCUMENT
CLASSIFICATION : ~~T~~
RESTRICTIONS : 1B
CURRENT STATUS : X
DATE OF LAST REVIEW : 07/24/98OPENING CRITERIA :
ORIGINATING AGENCY'S DETERMINATION REQUIRED

COMMENTS :

[R] - ITEM IS RESTRICTEDDRV FM: NSA/CSS Manual 123-2
Dated: 24 February 1998
DECL ON: X1,X3,X5,X6,X7,X8~~TOP SECRET UMBRA~~

~~TOP SECRET DINAR~~

Italian

ITDP

WS 12404

3/0/ITD/T3564-63
IS 02 Dec 1935Z P
Dist: HCF
ST 300

ITALIAN REPORT ON MIKOYAN TALKS IN THE UNITED STATES

FR Washington: FENOALTEA
TO Rome: Foreign Ministry
Msg Nr: 145429 Nov 63
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On the subject of the conversation which MIKOYAN had with President JOHNSON, the Department told us that it does not yet have a record of the conversation. As far as our interlocutor knew the conversation was of a general nature. MIKOYAN, after expressing the sincere sorrow of the head of the Soviet Government and the entire Soviet population for the tragic death of President KENNEDY, expressed hope that relations between the two countries could continue to develop peacefully in conformity with the KENNEDY policy. President JOHNSON gave assurances that it is his firm intention to keep the preceding line of policy unaltered.

MIKOYAN then met with RUSK.

The conversation lasted about an hour. The Department told us that MIKOYAN began by repeating the ideas expressed to JOHNSON, and RUSK assured him that the change of Presidents did not mean a change in the foreign policy of the United States. In spite of the fact that the two countries have different positions on many international questions--RUSK continued--it is necessary to explore the area of common interests even if it is not possible to conclude formal agreements.

The conversation was then devoted to problems of disarmament, limitation of the arms race, and reduction of military expenditures. Particular importance was given to the question of nondissemination

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of nuclear arms. On this last aspect MIKOYAN repeated the well-known Soviet thesis concerning the incompatibility between an agreement on nondissemination and the establishment of a NATO multilateral force.

Bilateral problems were then briefly mentioned and RUSK expressed hope that discussions on a consular agreement and negotiations on cultural exchange can be fruitful.

RUSK then concluded the talk by affirming that, on the broader international problems, the United States will discuss the Western position with its allies in December.

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